TORONTO

STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED

Youth Lounge Implementation

Date:	July 29, 2014
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	Acting General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	P:\2014\Cluster A\PFR\CD31-081414-AFS#19470

SUMMARY

City Council adopted the City of Toronto's 2013-2017 Recreation Service Plan in November 2012. The Recreation Service Plan will guide the City of Toronto's planning and delivery of recreation programs and services through 2017.

An Implementation Plan was approved in July 2013 with a subsequent Youth Recreation Engagement Strategy approved in October 2013 to guide planning for youth services and programs. The Community Development and Recreation Committee approved the Recreation Services for Youth: Expansion of Youth Spaces report in December 2013 for consideration during the 2014 Operating Budget process. The report outlined a Community Recreation based youth lounge model based on the St. Stephens Community House approach. This model includes a space dedicated to youth, designed to create a welcoming environment with a program that operates five days a week with dedicated, consistent staff and programmed for youth interests including sports, arts, media and leadership.

The addition of ten Community Recreation youth lounges based on the enhanced model was approved in the 2014 Operating Budget with a three year phase-in plan for implementation; four sites were approved in 2014; three sites in 2015 and the final three in 2016.

This report provides an update on the implementation of the four sites for September 2014 and the establishment of the Youth Lounge Advisory Committee as directed by City Council to provide input on the start-up and operation of the youth spaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Acting General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends:

1. City Council receive this report for information.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications from the adoption of this report.

The enhanced Community Recreation youth lounge model was outlined in a report entitled "Recreation Services for Youth: Expansion of Youth Space" (CD25.6) and adopted by City Council through the 2014 Operating Budget on January 29 and 30, 2014 (EX37.1) with a three year phase-in plan for implementation. The financial impact of the enhanced youth lounge model is $0.378 million in 2014, an incremental $0.875 million in 2015 and $0.537 million in 2016 for an annual total of $1.790 million.

The funding of $0.378 million required in 2014 for the first four sites is included in the Parks, Forestry and Recreation 2014 Approved Operating Budget. An additional three lounge sites are scheduled to open in 2015 with the remaining three lounges scheduled to open in 2016. The 2015 and 2016 financial impacts will be considered by City Council during the Budget approval process.

Enhanced Youth Space Expansion Summary				
Category	**Incremental Impact ($000's)**			
	2014	**2015**	**2016**	**Annual Total**
Gross Expenditures	$ 378.0	$ 875.0	$ 537.0	$ 1,790.0
Revenue	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Net Expenditures	$ 378.0	$ 875.0	$ 537.0	$ 1,790.0
Positions (FTE)	7.8	12.4	8.6	28.8
# of Sites	4	3	3	10

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer have reviewed this report and agree with the financial impact information.

Equity Impact

The purpose of the Update on the Expansion of Youth Lounges report is to provide an update on the implementation of the four youth lounge sites for September 2014 and the establishment of the Youth Lounge Advisory Committee to provide input on the start-up and operation of the youth spaces. The enhanced youth lounges will increase access to recreation services for all youth including equity seeking and underserved populations (e.g. Aboriginal people, newcomers, refugees, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual,

transgender, queer (LGBTQ), and people with disabilities). The sites will be open, welcoming and inclusive spaces that will reduce barriers to participation for youth.

DECISION HISTORY

The Recreation Services for Youth Report, with the Youth Recreation Engagement Strategy, was approved by City Council in October 2013.
http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.CD23.1

The Recreation Services for Youth: Expansion of Youth Spaces report was approved by Community Development and Recreation Committee and referred to the Budget Advisory Committee for consideration in the 2014 Operating Budget in December 2013.
http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.CD25.6

The Community Recreation Enhanced Youth Lounges were approved in the Parks, Forestry and Recreation 2014 Operating Budgets in January 2014.
http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.EX37.1

Councillor Pasternak was appointed to the Advisory Committee on Youth Lounges in April 2014.
http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.ST14.2

ISSUE BACKGROUND

City Council adopted the City of Toronto's 2013-2017 Recreation Service Plan in November 2012 to guide the City of Toronto's planning and delivery of recreation programs and services through 2017. A Youth Recreation Engagement Strategy was approved in October 2013 to guide implementation of the Recreation Service Plan and planning for youth services and programs. The Youth Recreation Engagement Strategy was informed through extensive outreach in summer 2013 that included input from approximately 1,600 individual youth and 80 community agencies.

The Community Development and Recreation Committee approved the Recreation Services for Youth: Expansion of Youth Spaces report in December 2013 for consideration during the 2014 Operating Budget process. The report outlined an enhanced Community Recreation youth lounge model based on the St. Stephens Community House approach. The enhanced model includes a space dedicated to youth that is designed to create a welcoming environment. The lounge operates five days a week, year round, with dedicated, consistent staff and programmed for youth interests including sports, arts, media and leadership.

The enhanced Community Recreation based youth lounge model was approved and ten new youth lounges were included as part of the 2014 Operating Budget with a three year phase-in plan for implementation: four sites in 2014; three sites in 2015 and the final three in 2016.

This report provides an update on the implementation of the four sites in September 2014 and the establishment of the Youth Lounge Advisory Committee as directed by City Council to provide input on the start-up and operation of the youth spaces.

COMMENTS

The enhanced Community Recreation youth lounge model includes a dedicated youth space in an existing community centre or community space. The cost of building new community centre infrastructure has not been included. Funding for the operation and programming of the first four youth lounges for September 2014 is $0.378 million and is provided in the 2014 Approved Operating Budget for Parks, Forestry and Recreation. The cost to implement three additional sites in 2015 is an incremental $0.875 million. The last three youth lounges in 2016 will cost an additional $0.537 million. The future financial impacts will be considered through the 2015 and 2016 Operating Budget Requests. The full year operating cost of an enhanced youth lounge is approximately $0.169 million per site, per year. There is also a one-time start-up cost of $10,000 per youth lounge in order to make the space "youth friendly" through the addition of computers, comfortable furniture, media and sports equipment for a total cost of $1.790 million. The enhanced youth lounge model includes a full-time youth staff dedicated to each site to support information and referrals, community based partnership development, and support and supervision of youth lounge staff. The full-time staff is dedicated specifically to the youth lounge and is in addition to any current Community Recreation staff on site, including Youth Outreach Workers.

Youth Lounge Advisory Committee

The enhanced Community Recreation youth lounge model was approved in the 2014 Operating Budget and Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff were directed to establish a Youth Lounge Advisory Committee to provide ongoing input on start-up and operation of youth spaces, and provide input and assist in the evaluation of potential neighbourhoods for new and enhanced youth spaces.

The Youth Lounge Advisory Committee was established in the spring of 2014 and had its first meeting May 15, 2014. The Committee is comprised of Councillor Pasternak, the Director of Community Recreation, City Divisional staff, Toronto Community Housing (TCH), Toronto District School Board (TDSB), Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB), youth serving agencies, Community Recreation for All, funders and youth. The Youth Lounge Advisory Committee Membership List and the Terms of Reference are attached as Appendices A and B, respectively.

The Youth Lounge Advisory Committee has been meeting regularly since May and has come to agreement on the first four youth lounge locations. The Committee will continue to meet during the fall of 2014 to confirm the next six locations and support the early operation of the sites and evaluation process. The Committee will continue to meet quarterly thereafter.

Location Criteria

As a starting point for this work, Parks Forestry and Recreation Staff undertook a youth needs assessment and mapping exercise that included youth population, income, Community Recreation facility information including current youth lounges, community agency data, schools, Toronto Community Housing sites and provincial and city Youth Outreach Workers. This helped to identify areas of the city with high youth population, low income and a gap in services for youth.

The Youth Lounge Advisory Committee determined a range of criteria to evaluate potential sites. An enhanced Community Recreation youth lounge should be situated in an area that is close to schools or malls to attract youth; in proximity to other youth services for referrals; should have access to gymnasium and kitchen facilities; and accessible to transit. The full list of 15 criteria is listed below:

1) Close to Schools
2) High Population of Youth
3) Proximity to Low Income (LIM) tracts
4) Co-ordinated Services
5) Partnership Opportunities
6) Youth Outreach Workers (Municipal or Provincial)
7) Growth Capacity
8) Kitchen Access
9) Gymnasium Access
10) Demographic Need
11) Underserved Area
12) Space for Staff
13) Barrier Free
14) Safety/Security
15) Accessible by Transit

Locations 2014 implementation

Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff identified four sites in Community Recreation Centres that have dedicated space and capacity to house an enhanced youth lounge, meet all 15 criteria listed above, with the capacity for implementation in September 2014. The locations are listed and described below:

North Kipling Community Centre – Etobicoke-York District

North Kipling Community Centre is located in Rexdale, and has an existing youth lounge space that will be enhanced through this initiative. The current equipment and technology is in need of significant update. The community has experienced issues of violence and the youth lounge would provide a positive opportunity to engage youth. The site meets all of the criteria and North Kipling Community Centre has a comprehensive offering of youth programs that will allow youth a seamless opportunity to participate after lounge hours.

Antibes Community Centre – North York District

Antibes Community Centre is located in the Westminster-Branson Community and the youth lounge would be a new service at the facility. The need for a dedicated youth lounge space was previously identified and planning and consultation with youth is currently underway. The site meets all of the criteria and this space will consolidate existing youth media arts and drop-in programs into a youth dedicated space. The facility also has a swimming pool where aquatic leadership development courses are offered for youth.

Parkway Forest Community Centre – North York District

Parkway Forest is a newly built community centre, due to open in September 2014 and is located in the Henry Farm community. Parkway Forest has a purpose built youth lounge with computers, access to a gymnasium, teaching kitchen and outdoor garden terrace. Parkway Forest Community Centre meets all of the criteria and provides a unique opportunity to embed a welcoming environment for youth from the onset of operations.

Heron Park Community Centre – Scarborough District

Heron Park Community Centre is located in Kingston-Galloway community and has an existing dedicated youth lounge space that has recently resumed operation and would benefit from this investment. The current equipment and technology is in need of significant update. This site meets all of the criteria and has an existing Youth Advisory Council that will assist in the design and programming of the space. There is a strong offering of youth programs to allow participation by youth after lounge hours.

Programming

The programming component was a key consideration and point of discussion for the Youth Lounge Advisory Committee. This discussion was informed by a presentation from St. Stephens Community House on their model of service. A best practice scan of non-City operated youth lounges across the city was also conducted by Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff through site visits. Sites visited include St. Stephen's Youth Arcade, East Metro Youth Services The Zone, The SPOT Malvern, L.A.M.P. Street Level, Boys and Girls Club of East Scarborough, Success Beyond Limits and Toronto Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club Miles and Kelly Nadal Youth Centre.

There are three key components, consistent across all sites that contribute to a successful youth lounge space. The space must be youth led, with youth determining the design of space and programs based on local interests and needs of youth in the community. The space must be dedicated to youth, with access at least five days a week. Programming for equity seeking groups should be made available through designated nights (i.e. LGBTQ, female-only, people with disabilities, newcomers, Aboriginal youth). The most significant component is the inclusion of full-time, well trained staff that is consistent at the site and has the ability to build a relationship with youth over time.

Next Steps

Toronto City Council approved ten enhanced Community Recreation youth lounges as part of this initiative that will be phased- in over three years. These first four sites were not ranked in order of importance or need within the ten. They were selected because they meet the criteria, are in communities in need of youth services and have the capacity for implementation in September 2014.

The Youth Lounge Advisory Committee will continue to meet regularly throughout the fall to confirm the remaining six sites for implementation in 2015 and 2016 by end of year. The Committee will support the initial start-up of the sites and will support an evaluation of the youth lounges that will occur in winter 2015.

Alignment to the Toronto Youth Equity Strategy

Toronto City Council approved the Toronto Youth Equity Strategy (TYES) in February 2014. The TYES seeks to support youth (aged 13-29) who are most vulnerable to involvement in serious violence and crime by taking steps to better coordinate youth service delivery in Toronto and by identifying specific service enhancements.

The TYES is supported through an interdivisional staff team of City Divisions, including Parks, Forestry and Recreation. The enhanced Community Recreation youth lounge initiative is action 13 e) of the TYES: "Parks, Forestry and Recreation will introduce ten new enhanced youth spaces with resources for programing and equipment at suitable locations across Toronto". Many of the City Divisions including Social Development, Finance and Administration are represented at the Youth Lounge Advisory Committee to ensure input and support for implementation.

CONCLUSION

The addition of ten enhanced Community Recreation based youth lounges was approved in the 2014 Operating Budget with a three year, phased- in plan for implementation; four sites approved in 2014; three sites in 2015 and the final three in 2016. This model includes a space dedicated to youth, designed to create a welcoming environment with a program that operates five days a week with dedicated, consistent staff and programmed for youth interests including sports, arts, media and leadership.

This report provides an update on the four locations that will be implemented in September 2014 and a summary of work to date including the establishment of the Youth Lounge Advisory Committee, needs assessment, development of criteria and programming components of the enhanced youth lounges. The remaining six sites will be confirmed by the end of 2014.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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Janie Romoff
Acting General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Youth Lounge Advisory Committee Membership List
Appendix B: Youth Lounge Advisory Committee Terms of Reference